

The Girl I am not, When I'm with You

By Chelsea Lea



I have always slept alone until you.
The night before our first date she showed up with bells on;
scalp bleached, tits out and an ass to hip ratio that was perfect.
Her name was Shelley.

Shelley walked into my house like she owned it,
dove into my sheets
stole them all for herself -
making room for only her small body and the potential of yours.

She's loud but never obnoxious,
confident but never cocky,
takes up just the right amount of space
and always knows the right things to say.

Shelley is woken every so often by the stench of a date,
like a princess kissed and woken after years of sleep.
I used to like it when she showed up,
until I'm reminded why we poison princesses in the first place.

Mornings I watch as she wakes up as glamorous as she goes to bed,
steps into the shower
uses all of the hot water
and leaves my towel on the wet floor to soak.

She stares too long in the mirror,
perhaps making up for all of the times I ignore it,
or worse
spit on it,
or worse
attempt to punch it.

On our first date, she asked you questions about yourself to fill the time,
leaving no room for me to speak.
I'd be damned if I ruined this for the both of us,
and I can see you like Shelley more than you'd like me.

She started showing up every time you did,
and I don't even think you noticed,
the way she would crawl into my mouth
unhinge my jaw with her bitch-black claws
and step inside.

Those same claws would take over my phone when we'd text,
she knows she can date better than me
she won't let me screw this up.

I wake every morning before she does,
and recoil to my side of the bed
trying not to startle the sleeping beauty
but I wake her every time,
there's no point trying to outsmart her.

She pulls the sheets so that you and her are close,
wraps her arms around your torso
and you smile
thinking she is me.

Showers are crowded when it's the three of us,
so, I start standing outside the door
watching you and her use up all of the fucking hot water.

And I wonder if you even know what I look like?
could you pick me in a crowded room?
tell the differences between Shelley and me?

She starts burning my books because she knows you think fiction is for pussies,
she whispers this to me while I sleep,
a hand on your chest while she chants.

She drowns out my music with your favourite,
and does her best porn star impression at night
while I hide under the bed and listen,
waiting for the floor to swallow me whole.

She doesn't listen when I say we should leave,
I watch her blindly collect the crumbs of your love
in hopes of one day becoming full,
while I sit in the corner,
starving.

I begin searching for exit routes every time we are alone with you,
but she bolt locks the door
in an attempt to keep me in
because there is no her without me,
or maybe she's locking you in too.

She ignores those matchstick fingers of yours
that I only allow to touch me with caution,
and acts like I don't notice her at night
dowsing herself in gasoline,
flames in her eyes.

She thinks I don't hear her in the bathroom,
searching for something lost with the hook of her fingers
after seeing you look at a girl much thinner than us.

When her roots grow back and her body is too thin to be sexy,
she starts sleeping under the bed with me,
she starts reading books in which the guy stays.

When you tell her that she's "changed"
she starts asking *me* questions about myself,
she starts letting *me* shower again.

And when you finally decide to leave,
she begs me to claw at you with her
hoping I need you just as much as she does.

But eventually, she unbolts the door
and locks it behind you in case I try to follow,
but it's impossible to leave myself.

So instead, I make us breakfast,
and hold her while she cries in the shower,
now, a not so crowded place.

She throws up the breakfast anyway,
she breaks a nail punching the wall
and spits at the mirror—
realising just how similar we are starting to look.

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